

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6835

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 0129

FOR AF ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, US, XA
SUBJ: NEW POLICY INITIATIVES IN AFRICA

REF: 77 STATE 311031

SUMMARY: IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL ON NEW POLICY INITIATIVES IN AFRICA, EMBASSY ADDIS ABABA ENCOURAGED THAT DEPARTMENT DEVOTING HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION TO AFRICA AND WELCOMES OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON PROPOSED INITIATIVES. HOWEVER, EMBASSY BELIEVES THERE BASIC ISSUES WHICH MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED BEFORE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUES CAN BE INITIATED. THESE ARE U.S. READINESS TO BE RESPONSIVE ON SECURITY QUESTIONS, I.E. MILITARY SUPPLY; U.S. WILLINGNESS TO MAKE SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC CONCESSIONS, I.E. COMMODITY PRICES AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFERS; AND U.S. SENSITIVITY TO AFRICAN DESIRES TO FORGE OWN POLICIES ON CONTINENT FREE OF IDENTIFICATION WITH SUPERPOWERS. IT ALSO APPEARS TO EMBASSY ADDIS THAT SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE ON CONTINENT SHOULD BE FACTORED INTO US-AFRICAN BILATERAL RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY ADDIS ABABA NOTES IN BACKGROUND SECTION OF REFTEL THAT ONE OF ISSUES AFRICAN LEADERS BELIEVE U.S. TENDS TO IGNORE IS THEIR REGIONAL SECURITY AND POLITICAL CONCERNS. IT SHOULD ALSO BE ADDED THAT
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ECONOMIC ISSUES, NOTABLY COMMODITY AGREEMENTS AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFERS, FALL INTO SIMILAR CATEGORY, ESPECIALLY AMONG KEY "MODERATE" STATES WHERE NO SECURITY PROBLEMS EXIST. IF THE U.S. IS TO INITIATE DIALOGUES AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS, IT MUST BE PREPARED TO BE RESPONSIVE ON SECURITY AND ECONOMIC ISSUES IF THE DIALOGUES ARE TO HAVE ANY SUBSTANCE AND NOT JUST

FURTHER REINFORCE AFRICAN LEADERS' BELIEFS THAT U.S. IS STILL IGNORING THEIR PRIMARY CONCERNS. IN THIS REGARD THERE APPEAR TO BE BASIC CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN U.S. ARMS TRANSFER POLICIES, FREE MARKET TRADE POLICIES TO DATE, AND STATED DESIRE THAT AFRICA NOT BECOME ARENA OF SUPERPOWER CONFRONTATION ON ONE HAND, AND AFRICAN DESIRES FOR U.S. TO BE RESPONSIVE TO THEIR PERCEIVED ARMS REQUIREMENTS, TO DEMANDS FOR STABLE COMMODITY PRICES, AND TO OVERRIDING CONCERNS IN SOME CASES OF SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVEMENT ON BORDERS ON THE OTHER. WHILE EMBASSY AWARE SUCH CONTRADICTIONS CANNOT BE RESOLVED FULLY BEFORE INITIATING ANY HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUES, ONGOING EFFORTS TO DO SO SHOULD CONTINUE CONCURRENTLY.

2. FURTHERMORE, OAU LIBREVILLE SUMMIT SHOULD NOT BE BASIS ON WHICH DEPARTMENT ADJUDGES WHAT ARE MAJOR BILATERAL CONCERNS OF AFRICAN LEADERS. TRUE, CURRENT MULTILATERAL OR CONTINENT-WIDE CONCERNS PROBABLY ACCURATELY REFLECTED AT LIBREVILLE, BUT THESE NOT REPEAT NOT ISSUES UPON WHICH MAJORITY OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES BASE THEIR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH U.S. AS A BASICALLY POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, OAU HAS CONTINUED TO TALK COLLECTIVELY OF ESTABLISHING AN OAU PEACEKEEPING FORCE, BUT OAU OFFICIALS DO NOT BELIEVE IT WILL BE POSSIBLE ANY TIME IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE. CONFIDENTIAL

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OAU CANNOT EVEN FORM UNITS TO PARTICIPATE IN LIBERATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, WHICH IS AN ACKNOWLEDGED OAU-WIDE GOAL, LET ALONE FORM A UNIT TO RESOLVE CONTENTIOUS DISPUTES UPON WHICH THERE LITTLE OAU CONSENSUS. THEREFORE, WHILE EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WORTHY AND CORRECT TO ENCOURAGE OAU EFFORTS, IT UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT THEY WILL HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON STRAINED BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN AFRICAN STATES, NOT MATTER HOW FORCEFULLY US SUPPORTS OAU.

3. FINALLY, US SHOULD NOT BECOME TOO CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH POTENTIAL "LEADER" STATES, IF THESE STATES ARE TO RETAIN INDEPENDENT AND NECESSARILY AFRICAN VOICE IN AFRICAN COUNCILS. OTHERWISE, THESE STATES WILL BE SEEN AS STALKING HORSES FOR U.S. POLICY INTERESTS AND LOSE LARGE DEGREE OF CREDIBILITY AS SPOKESMAN FOR AFRICAN VIEWS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 0129

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4. DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES LISTED IN SECTION I HIGHLY COMMENDABLE AND CERTAINLY REFLECT HEIGHTENED U.S. INTEREST IN CONTINENT, BUT THEY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY APPEAR BOOTLESS AND POSSIBLY COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, IF USG NOT PREPARED TO BE RESPONSIBLE FROM ADMITTEDLY PAROCHIAL ADDIS VANTAGE POINT, EMBASSY FORESEES ARMS SUPPLY AS ONE OF KEY ISSUES IN U.S. BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH SUDAN AND KENYA IN HORN, SENEGAL AND POSSIBLY LIBERIA AND IVORY COAST IN WEST AFRICA, AND PROBABLY WITH ZAIRE. ON ECONOMIC SIDE, IT ALMOST CERTAIN GABON, IVORY COAST, LIBERIA, SENEGAL, ZAIRE AND PERHAPS CAMEROON WILL DESIRE U.S. ECONOMIC CONCESSIONS ON PRICES OF THEIR COMMODITIES AS DEMONSTRATION OF U.S. BILATERAL COMMITMENT TO SOLID RELATIONSHIP. WHILE IT CORRECT TO BE SYMPATHETIC TO AND AWARE OF AFRICAN CONCERNS, IF U.S. EXPECTS SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT, WE MUST DEMONSTRATE MORE THAN JUST GOODWILL WHEN AFRICANS BELIEVE OUR RESOURCES ARE SUFFICIENT TO FULFILL AFRICAN NEEDS. CONTINUOUS PALAVERING AND HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION MAY ASSUAGE CERTAIN AFRICAN EGOS, BUT IT WILL NOT SATISFY REAL OR PERCEIVED NEEDS OF MOST COUNTRIES.

5. IN THE SHORT TERM, IT DOES NOT APPEAR LIKELY THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS WILL BE WILLING TO REDUCE THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE IN AFRICA, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE
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CRITICAL ROLES THEY ARE PLAYING IN ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA. IF IT IS THE U.S. DESIRE TO DECREASE ARMS TRANSFERS TO AFRICA AND NOT HAVE AFRICA BECOME AN ARENA FOR SUPERPOWER RIVALRY, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO HAVE

SOVIET AND CUBAN COOPERATION. OTHERWISE "MODERATE" AFRICAN LEADERS WILL RAISE THE SPECTRE OF COMMUNISM, A LA SUDAN, SOMALIA, ZAIRE, NIGER, CHAD AND EVENTUALLY KENYA, TO PRESSURE THE U.S. INTO TRANSFERRING U.S. WEAPONS TO THESE COUNTRIES. THE U.S. SHOULD THEREFORE DEVISE A STRATEGY TO LIMIT SOVIET/CUBAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA PERHAPS SIMILAR TO CURRENT INDIAN OCEAN NEGOTIATIONS TO MAKE AREA ZONE OF PEACE. U.S.-SOVIET/CUBAN RELATIONS TRANSCEND U.S.-AFRICAN RELATIONS AND IT SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT TO OFFER SPECIFIC COURSES OF ACTION TO ALTER SOVIET BEHAVIOR IN AFRICA. HOWEVER, IT DOES SEEM TO BE KEY TO LIMITING AMRS TRANSFERS TO AFRICA.

6. ON ECONOMIC SIDE TOO, ISSUES OF COMMODITY PRICES, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFERS, AND NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER (NIEO) SEEM TO TRANSCEND U.S.-AFRICAN RELATIONS. IT IS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH OVERALL ECONOMIC POLICIES TOWARD THE THIRD WORLD THAT ARE SOMEWHAT RESPONSIVE TO PERCEIVED NEEDS, SO THAT THE U.S. RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC AFRICAN DEMANDS ARE NOT ON A PIECEMEAL BASIS, HAVING NO GENERAL APPLICATION. THE ECONOMIC FIELD IS AN AREA WHERE U.S. ENJOYS HUGE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE OVER SOVIETS AND CUBANS AND IS PROPERLY REFLECTED IN ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES SECTION. HOWEVER, THESE TENTATIVE FIRST STEPS MAY NOT BE ENOUGH TO SATISFY AFRICAN NEEDS AND U.S. SHOULD BEAR THIS IN MIND.

7. IN CONCLUSION, DURING A PERIOD WHEN MILITARISM, CONFIDENTIAL

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ARMED BORDER DISPUTES AND ARMS SUPPLY TRANSFERS ARE INCREASING IN AFRICA, THE U.S. SHOULD ANTICIPATE THAT MILITARY SUPPLY WILL BE A MAJOR ISSUE DURING MANY OF THE PROPOSED DIPLOMATIC CONSULTATIONS AND COULD BE THE ACID TEST OF THE DEPTH OF U.S. INTENTIONS TOWARD SPECIFIC COUNTRIES. IN THOSE COUNTRIES WHERE MILITARY SECURITY IS NOT A PARAMOUNT CONCERN, THEN SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC CONCESSIONS MAY BE THE CRITERIA UPON WHICH U.S. SINCERITY IS GAUGED. IF THE U.S. CANNOT CONSTRUCT A STRATEGY THAT WILL BE MORE SUBSTANTIVE THAN MERE WORDS, THIS EMBASSY BELIEVES IT VERY RISKY TO INITIATE DIALOGUES THAT MERELY PURPORT TO BE RESPONSIVE TO AFRICAN CONCERNS.

8. IN INTEREST OF DRAWING ATTENTION TO CREATIVE ANALYSIS BY JUNIOR OFFICERS, CHARGE WISHES TO POINT OUT ABOVE WAS DRAFTED BY FSO-06 RICHARD A. ROT. IT DOES, HOWEVER, REFLECT VIEWS OF EMBASSY ADDIS. MATHERON

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